Comel

TL 1526-4

Indonesia's reign of terror

Despite strict security, Dennis Schulz recently visited the scene of last year's Dili massacre and was given evidence of new atrocities. But Indonesian authorities were waiting to grab the crucial film — and deport him

The young Indonesian intelligence officer boasted: "We know who you are. We know you are a journalist. We know you have been here before and we know what you have written about us."

They did indeed know about my previous excursion to Dili and the subsequent BULLETIN article (Dec 17, 1991) revealing the location of the mass grave of those killed at the Santa Cruz massacre on November 12 and afterwards. Since then foreign journalists have been banned in East Timor and, as they searched my bags with clinical efficiency, I didn't need to be told I was in serious trouble.

They were polite and professional. "You have been observed photographing a military vessel," the officer said, throwing down a snapshot of me taken an hour before by someone at the dockside.

Warships: "We will confiscate any pictures you have taken that could violate Indonesian security." I told him that I thought the rust bucket with guns steaming out of Dili Harbour was a floating World War II relic. He didn't laugh. We both knew it was one of the warships that forced the untimely return to Darwin of the *Lusitania Expresso*, the Portuguese peace ship.

I had not anticipated this shakedown. If I had, I would have taken the film still in my Nikon and hidden it, along with the other – more important – roll slipped to me by a courageous young East Timorese student.

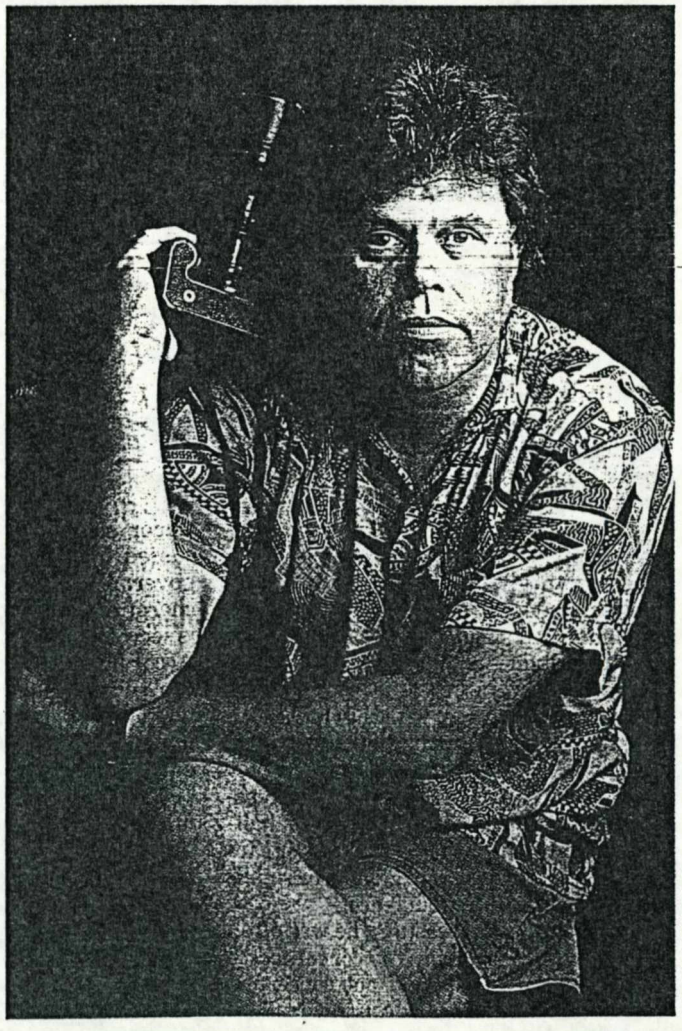
I had come to Dili the hard way. For the past month Europeans had been selectively refused entry to the East Timorese capital and turned back at their Indonesian airport of embarkation. I waited until the *Lusitania* episode was over, then made my way overland by bus from the West Timorese capital of Kupang. I had come to investigate claims that the Indonesian military was systematically moving large numbers of East Timorese out of the capital and into detention camps.

There had been no military roadblocks when I left East Timor by this road in December, shortly after the massacre. But now travelling was restricted. Written permission, or a *surat*, was required from the army before you could travel in the province. A tourist *surat* took me through three army roadblocks and some close scrutiny. I was also aware of the plainclothes policeman sitting next to me in the crowded bus, the butt of his .38 Special bulging from his polo shirt.

The bus arrived in Dili just after dusk. The city was already deserted. The East Timorese dare not move around after dark because of the unofficial curfew, the only movement coming from Javanese and other immigrants brought to Timor under Indonesia's infamous Trans-Immigrasi Program. Everybody is aware of the danger in going out on the streets that are under army control. Last week, a Timorese teacher found a plastic bag at the roadside containing the bodies of two young people who did not make it home before dark.

Solidarity: Still, things have relaxed since the *Lusitania* episode. The peace ship was taken seriously by the Indonesian army administration and the population at large. The generals expected demonstrations of support by anti-integration nationalists, while the East Timorese looked on the exercise as an expression of solidarity from abroad. "We look to people from other countries for help," one East Timorese youth said, "because we know in our hearts that without them there is no hope for us. The Indonesians are trying to wipe us out one by one."

During my only night in Dili, a situation only a few kilometres away highlighted the young man's fears. At 3am an estimated 80 members of the Indonesian army's crack red beret unit surrounded a house in suburban Bairro Pite and arrested the four teenagers sleeping inside. The crime of José Montero, Estanislau Costa, Gil Montero and José Jalucho



BARRY LEDWIDGE

was to have been present at the illegal demonstration at Santa Cruz cemetery on November 12 last year, when the Indonesian army allegedly killed more than 200 East Timorese. As the youngsters were dragged from the house, eye witnesses said beatings had already begun.

At daybreak I hailed a cab, one of Dili's rolling blue wrecks. The driver was East Timorese and when I told him to drive to Santa Cruz cemetery his face lit up. Since the massacre, the cemetery has become an unlikely focal point for the struggle against Indonesian domination. I watched for anyone following us.

Meeting Caesar: We swung into a quiet suburban street where a young man stood laughing as he played with a group of children. After an introduction by the driver in Portuguese, we exchanged greetings. His English was excellent in a country where communication is often impossible, and he showed a maturity well beyond his 18 years. Caesar asked why I wanted to go to Santa Cruz. "To lay the wreath the people on the *Lusitania Expresso* were unable to," I replied.

A big smile crept across his face. I told him I was an Australian journalist and he began speaking freely about the peace ship. "We were so very happy about the Portuguese *Lusitania*. It gave us great hope that there was someone who had not abandoned us...someone who would help us and put pressure on the Indonesians. So we decided to have a demonstration of support when they landed."

But wouldn't that have almost certainly created a situation not unlike the disastrous demonstration that led to the Santa Cruz massacre? "No," Caesar said naïvely. "The Indonesians would not have dared to attack us with so many foreigners watching."

But in the end the *Lusitania* brought only disillusionment. "We had many banners painted and we had plans for the demonstration in place when we heard that they had been turned back," the teenager said. "We were so sad. My father began crying when he heard the news on the radio. He said we would never be free. Then we all began crying."

As part of their preparations to deal with the Portuguese peace ship, the Indonesian military had begun a systematic removal of young East Timorese students and activists whom they suspected would continue to embarrass them internationally. "They have taken so many people," Caesar said, "that everyone knows some people who have been taken. They arrest them and take them without any belongings to two towns in the southern Same district, Betano and Viqueque."

The Indonesians call these towns "strategic villages", a concept conceived by the United States in Vietnam. But the East Timorese call them *campo de concentracao* (concentration camps). "After they go, we do not know what happens to them or if they will ever be back," Caesar said. "The Indonesians do not want the East Timorese in Dili."

At the Santa Cruz cemetery, Caesar said he and the driver would return for me in 15 minutes. It was too dangerous to wait. I passed the headstones to place a wreath on one grave in remembrance of those killed in November.

When the taxi returned for me, Caesar's face was dark. "I am going to give you something but if the Indonesians know it came from me they will kill me. You understand? Please look forward when we talk. Now...take this and hide it until you get back to Darwin. It will show Australia people what our life is like with the Indonesians."

DENNIS SCHULTZ

A funeral at the Santa Cruz cemetery shortly after the November massacre

Film canister: I looked down at a roll of exposed film, with a note packed into the canister. "These are pictures we have taken, along with a coded letter," Caesar said. "Pictures of people after their release from the military. People with their ears cut off. People who have been burned and beaten all over their body. People with slashes across their faces. Pictures to show to Australia people." I took the canister, removed a new roll from my bag and put Caesar's film into the Fuji box, sticking down the lid so it would appear a new, unused box of slides.

"Keep us in your heart when you return to your country," he said as the car stopped. As requested, I did not turn around to say goodbye.

My usually good contacts in Dili were not forthcoming because of the fear gripping the city. I tried one last avenue to corroborate Caesar's charges. I tried to speak to Governor Mario Corrascalao, the outspoken East Timorese civil head of state, a man locked in battle with diabetes – and the Indonesian military.

Suspected: But first one must make an appointment with one of his functionaries, an East Timorese suspected by some to be a collaborator with the Indonesians. He remembered me from my previous visit. However, he said an appointment was impossible. His manner was cold and unwelcoming but I thought nothing of it, deciding instead to leave my hotel and go to the airport before anybody else recognised me.

It was at the New Resende Hotel that the youthful Indonesian intelligence officer stopped me.

"You will come with me, please, Mr Schulz," he snapped. "You will be searched and interrogated by intelligence and immigration officials."

I cannot remember being angrier with myself. I knew exactly who had betrayed me. Now they would get the films. They opened all my boxes — and confiscated Caesar's film. They could not read the letter written in English but they would, no doubt, give it to someone who could.

They said I must go to the airport and leave Dili without delay. They followed me and stood by until I was on board. But as I looked out the window, my thoughts remained with Caesar. Surely the film and letter could not be traced to him? But I checked into a Kupang hotel and immediately telephoned Caesar to warn him.

"Caesar, the Indonesians detained me and found your film. They took the film and your letter...do you understand? I'm sorry, Caesar. I'm so sorry. You must be very careful."

"I understand, Dennis...yes, I understand," he said. A pause.

"Dennis...I love you." ■